

## Message

**From:** Olson, Jon [jolson@austin.utexas.edu]  
**Sent:** 4/3/2015 9:15:06 PM  
**To:** Wood, Sharon L [swood@utexas.edu]; Speitel, Gerald E [speitel@utexas.edu]  
**CC:** Stickney, Stephanie [stickney@austin.utexas.edu]; Olson, Jon [jolson@austin.utexas.edu]; Kamy Sepehrnoori [kamys@mail.utexas.edu]  
**Subject:** PGE hiring proposal

Hi Sharon and Jerry – We had a faculty meeting on Monday and voted to extend offers to 2 assistant professor level candidates. I would like to meet with you as soon as possible to get your approval to proceed with the process. I would bring my associate chairman (Kamy Sepehrnoori), who is the chair of the faculty recruiting committee, to attend the meeting as well if convenient. Next week isn't much better than this week for us for meetings, but hopefully we can make something work. In the meantime, ....

## Basic Data on Our Hiring Process:

PGE faculty recruiting committee– Sepehrnoori (chair), Bommer, Van Oort, Pope, DiCarlo, Prodanovic, Srinivasan, and Ganesan (from ChE).

Applications = 53

½ hour skype interviews = 7 candidates

On-site interviews = 2 (1 more planned)

Senior candidates being considered = 1

PhD programs representing top 10 applicants: Delft, Norway University of Science and Technology, ETH Zurich, Penn State, Stanford, UT-Austin, Eindhoven University of Technology-Netherlands, USC

Other data: we have been interviewing assistant professor level candidates every year for the last 3 years, so we feel we have a pretty good perspective on what is out there

Faculty meeting, Monday, March 30 – We discussed our candidates and voted to hire Zoya Heidari and Ryosuke Okuno. We voted separately on each candidate, and approved the offer by a vote of 13 to 1 for each candidate.

## Qualifications of Zoya Heidari –

- UT-PGE Phd graduated spring 2011
- assistant professor in petroleum engineering at Texas A&M since Fall 2011
- 13 journal papers published since 2011 (16 total)
- 31 conference papers since 2011 (39 total)
- \$3.25 million research funding raised at Texas A&M as her share of total \$10 million
- Supervising 6 MS and 8 PhD, with 2 MS graduated – two PhD's expected to graduate by May 2015

Zoya has an exceptional record from her PhD work at UT and her time as an assistant professor at Texas A&M. In conversations with the chairman at A&M, it is clear that she is one of their up and coming stars. Her publication productivity and research funding are very impressive, particularly considering the department at A&M had no existing program in her field of formation evaluation for her to build on. She has distinguished herself from her research advisor, Dr. Carlos Torres-Verdin, but branching out from the numerical modeling emphasis as a PhD to a significant laboratory component at A&M. She would immediately fit into our teaching needs for several undergraduate and graduate courses. When she was at UT, she showed herself to be capable in a teaching capacity when participating in outreach events, and her courses at A&M are well received.

## Qualifications for Ryosuke Okuno-

- UT-PGE Phd graduated summer 2009
- assistant professor in civil and environmental engineering at University of Alberta since Fall 2010
- 7 years experience as a petroleum engineering for Japan Petroleum Exploration Co., Ltd.
- 11 journal papers published since fall 2010 (13 total)
- 11 conference papers since 2011 (16 total)



- ~\$700,000 research funding raised at University of Alberta
- Supervising 3 MS and 6 PhD, with 3 MS and 3 M.Eng. graduated – one PhD expected to graduate by May 2015

Ryosuke also has an exceptional record of productivity as an assistant professor with regard to research. The assessment of our reservoir engineering professors (Mohany and Pope), he is an exceptional intellect in the field of petroleum fluid phase behavior, and according to his primary PhD supervisor's, Dr. Russell Johns (now head of the petroleum engineering program at Penn State), Ryosuke is one of the best PhD students he has ever had. His expertise in phase behavior and the effective implementation of the theoretical equations into practical reservoir simulation is an expertise UT has not had since Dr. Johns left in 2011. He too could immediately fit into our teaching schedule at both the undergraduate and graduate level, and we have a keen need for his expertise at the moment as we are losing Mark McClure, who was teaching our sophomore phase behavior class.

In summary, both of these candidates have excellent records as assistant professors compared to their peers in petroleum engineering, and they both have proven themselves capable of running a viable research program at the respective universities. They clearly stand out as superior to our other current candidates, and they are of highest rank compared to the candidates we have been interviewing the last 3 years. Both have established independent research programs separate from their former PhD supervisors, and in the case of Okuno, his supervisor left UT in 2011 and we have never been able to fully replace that expertise. Regaining Ryosuke's ability in phase behavior would be significant boost to our already considerable expertise in Enhanced Oil Recovery, specifically related to gas injection. The phase behavior expertise is also applicable to carbon storage issues (the phase behavior of CO<sub>2</sub> in the presence of water), and that would help us recover some of the capability we lost when Dr. Steve Bryant left.

Why do they want to come to UT? Both voiced the fact that they felt UT was the best environment for research in petroleum, and clearly had superior grad students to their respective universities.

Challenges: Since Zoya is very highly regarded at A&M, it could be a tough contest to win her over, but she seems motivated to come here. Okuno is a top candidate for an open position at Stanford, so time is of the essence to get him an offer.

Thanks for your consideration. We hope to meet with you soon.

-Jon

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